

Pre-Trib Study Group
Mystery Babylon Identified

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About twenty-five hundred years ago God gave the prophet Daniel a vision of four strange beasts representing the four world empires which are now history: the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman. Yes, there were other large empires based in Egypt, China, Central and South America and Arabia, but Scripture gives them no prophetic significance because they will not rise again, only Rome will. Symbolic of the Roman Empire, the fourth beast retained characteristics of the three empires which preceded it, yet it was far more "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured" (Dan 7:7) the known world, breaking and trampling all that opposed it.

This fourth beast had ten horns corresponding to the ten toes on the huge image seen in Daniel chapter two, an image which depicted the same four world empires. The image's two legs foretold the split of the Roman Empire: politically, when Constantine moved his capital to Constantinople in 330 A.D.; and religiously, between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, when in 1054 Pope Leo IX in Rome excommunicated Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople. The ten toes of iron mixed with clay signified ten kings who must reign when "the God of heaven [shall] set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan 2:44).

Nearly 700 years after Daniel, around 95 A.D., the Apostle John was given three further prophetic visions of this terrible fourth beast as recorded in Revelation 12, 13, and 17. At that time, the world empires represented by the first three beasts had come and gone exactly as Daniel had prophesied. The fourth beast-the Roman Empire-was then at the height of its power. It, too, would fall, but unlike its three predecessors and exactly as the Bible foretold, it would not be conquered by a successor. No fifth empire would arise to take its place.

Instead, Scripture foretold that the Roman Empire itself would be revived in a more powerful form to control all of earth just before Christ's Second Coming. Numerous Scriptures indicate this. Since the Roman Empire was never ruled by ten kings at one time as foreseen in the image's ten toes and the fourth beast's ten horns ("ten kings that shall arise" - Dan 7:24), it must be revived worldwide divided into ten regions under separate sub-rulers accountable to Antichrist. Ten nations in Western Europe could hardly represent the revival of an empire which included far more in its day. Moreover, we are clearly told that "power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him..." (Rev 13:7-8). Interestingly, today's world has already been divided into ten regions by the Club of Rome. Only when Antichrist's position and power have been fully established will the Second Coming take place with Christ returning to destroy Antichrist and his kingdom and to set up His own Millennial reign over this earth from Jerusalem: "whom the Lord shall destroy... with the brightness of his coming..." (2 Thes 2:8-9).

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 of Zechariah prophesy quite clearly not a gradual take-over of the world as some teach, but a cataclysmic intervention by Christ from heaven. So did Daniel: "...a stone [Christ] was cut out without hands, which smote the image... [which] became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried [it] away... and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain [Christ's kingdom], and filled the whole earth" (Dan 2:34-35). This unprecedented event known as the Second Coming can only take place "in the days of these [ten] kings..." (2:44).

John saw this fourth beast three times: first as a red dragon seeking to destroy Israel: "...and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads..." (Rev 12). In chapter 13 this dreadful beast appears again representing the revived Roman Empire whose "deadly wound was healed"-and also its ruler, the Antichrist whom "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship." Notice, "the dragon gave him his power and his seat and great authority." So the "red dragon," who is Satan, is actually building his kingdom and using Antichrist to his own ends.

John expresses no shock at the sight of the beast; but in his third vision of this scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns he is staggered (Rev 17:6) when he sees a woman on its back. A WOMAN RIDES THE BEAST! And not as in a rodeo on a creature which is trying to buck her off, but sitting relaxed and comfortable, holding the reins, obviously a key player in the unfolding drama of Antichrist's rule over the revived Roman Empire! **Who is this woman?** John's vision provides at least fourteen specifics which identify her beyond question.

FIRST OF ALL, she is a **city** (v 19). Some authors have identified the United States as MYSTERY BABYLON, but that is clearly erroneous because the USA is a **country** and the woman is a **city**.

SECONDLY, the city sits on (i.e. is built on) **seven hills** (v 9). Several cities sit on seven hills. John's vision, however, eliminates all but one as we shall see. That the seven heads also signify seven kings does not take away from the fact that they, too, represent seven hills upon which the woman/city sits.

THIRDLY, emblazoned on her forehead is her name, MYSTERY, BABYLON. Saddam Hussein has been rebuilding Iraq's ancient city of Babylon, headquarters of the first world empire. The Woman could **not** be **that** city, however, rebuilt for the Antichrist, for several reasons. It is the **fourth** Empire headquartered in Rome which is to be brought back to life, not the Babylonian Empire. The ten toes and ten horns belong to Rome. And Babylon was not built on seven hills, nor does it meet **any** of the other identifying criteria. Rome, however, was and has universally been known as **the** city of seven hills. The **Catholic Encyclopedia** states: "It is within the city of Rome, called the city of seven hills, that the entire area of Vatican State proper is now confined."

Charles Dyer counters, "The seven heads are associated with the beast, not the woman... it does not identify the location of the prostitute because she is not an organic part of the beast." Nor is any cowboy an organic part of his horse. The seven heads **are** associated with the woman: they represent seven hills on which she sits. That's location. No **organic** relationship is required.

Interestingly, Rome was also known as Babylon. In his book, **Catholicism and Fundamentalism**, Catholic apologist Karl Keating writes: "Babylon is a code word for Rome. It is used that way six times in the last book of the Bible [so he acknowledges that the woman in Rev 17 is Rome!] and in extrabiblical works such as **Sibylling Oracles** (5, 159Q, **the Apocalypse of Baruch** (ii, 1), and **Esdras** (3:1). Eusebius Pamphilius, writing about 303, noted that ...Peter ...referr[ed] to [Rome] figuratively as Babylon [in 1 Pe 5:13]." The Bible often addresses a person or city under another name. For example, Jerusalem is called "Sodom and Egypt" (Rev 11:8) and Satan is addressed as the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 and as the prince of Tyrus in Ezekiel 28.

Could Rome be the Woman on the Beast? That would make good sense because the Beast she rides is the revived Roman Empire.

FOURTH, this Woman is called "the great whore... with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication..." (vs 1-2). While Ninevah (Nah 3:4) and Tyre (Isa 23:16-17) were associated with prostitution because of their rampant sexual immorality, literal whoredom and fornication would be impossible for a city. **Spiritual** fornication, however, would be possible for a city if it were a spiritual entity.

Jerusalem is such a city. It's called the "holy city" and the "city of God," having been chosen by God to represent Him to the nations. Tragically, Jerusalem violated that relationship and was repeatedly accused by God's prophets of spiritual harlotry and adultery. Isaiah said of Jerusalem: "How is the faithful city become a harlot" (1:21)! (See also 2 Chr 21:11; Jer 3:9, Ezek 16:1-15, etc.) Jerusalem, however, can't be the woman riding the Beast because it wasn't built on seven hills nor does it meet any of the other criteria in John's vision.

There is one other city in the world-and **only one**-which is a spiritual entity and could there-fore commit spiritual fornication with the kings of the earth. And it is built on seven hills. Again that city is Rome, the headquarters of Roman Catholicism, which claims to be the true Christianity. Its Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church claims that its members have taken the place of Israel as the true people of God and that Rome is therefore the New Jerusalem. Catholic Rome claims the very titles God gave to Jerusalem: "the Holy City" and "the City of God" and even "the Eternal City."

Let me state right now that I have no desire to attack Catholics. I'm not a Catholic "basher" as I've been accused of being. I love Catholics and want them to know the truth. Let's set the record straight. The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, which Vatican II repropounded, contain more than 100 anathemas damning me and every evangelical Christian for our beliefs and our unwillingness to accept Catholic dogmas and authority. So who is really "bashing" whom? Let's face the facts honestly-from history and the Bible-whatever they may be

We've already discovered from John's vision that these four criteria-being a city, known as Babylon, built on seven hills, that committed spiritual fornication with earth's rulers-have ruled out every city on earth **except** Rome. We are, of course, not talking about political/civil Rome, but about religious Rome and more specifically, the Vatican and the Roman Catholic

Church as the worldwide leader of a false and antichrist "Christianity." The pope is currently leading the greatest ecumenical movement in history in order to unite all religions under Rome's leadership.

As only one example, in 1986, Pope John Paul II gathered in Assisi, Italy the leaders of the world's major religions to pray for peace. There were snake worshipers, fire worshipers, spiritists, animists, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, North American Indian witchdoctors. I watched in astonishment as they walked to the microphone to pray. The Pope said they were all praying to the **same** "God" and that their prayers were creating a spiritual energy that was bringing about a new climate for peace. On that occasion John Paul II allowed his good friend the Dalai Lama to put the Buddha on the altar in St. Peter's church in Assisi and with his monks to have a Buddhist worship ceremony there, while Shintoists chanted and rang their bells outside. The prophesied world religion is in the process of being formed before our eyes and the Vatican is the headquarters of the movement. Is this not spiritual fornication such as no other city either has or could commit?

The objection is raised that Vatican City is only a small part of Rome and is not itself built on seven hills. Historically, however, the Popes ruled as kings over all of Rome and the surrounding area, as well as over large territories across Italy known as the papal states. Pope Innocent III abolished the Roman Senate and placed the administration of Rome directly under his control. It wasn't until 1870 that Rome and the other Vatican-controlled territories were finally captured by the army of the newly united Italy, the Jews were liberated at last from Rome's shameful ghetto and Pope Pius IX took refuge in Vatican City, which has been the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church ever since.

Today, the Vatican owns about one-third of Rome and its influence is everywhere through its monuments, churches and other institutions scattered throughout the entire city of seven hills. That Church proudly identifies itself as the **Roman** Catholic Church. A recent article in the **National Catholic Reporter**, titled "Rome, where the pontiff is supreme," declared: "No city comes close to being so suffused with religious culture as Rome is with Catholicism. What has emerged over the centuries is unmistakably a culture of the papacy." The article goes on to refer to the monuments to Roman Catholicism found everywhere in Rome and states: "All roads lead, sooner or later, down the via della Concilizione to the Vatican Rome is... the world's spiritual crossroads." **Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia** adds: "...hence, one understands the central place of Rome in the life of the Church today and the significance of the title, Roman Catholic Church Since the founding of the Church there... Rome has been the center of all Christendom." **World's spiritual crossroads ...center of all Christendom!** This is the one city in the world built on seven hills and known as Babylon which is undoubtedly a spiritual entity.

Has spiritual Rome violated its claimed relationship with Christ and thus been guilty of spiritual fornication? The popes have repeatedly engaged in partnership and thus spiritual fornication with emperors, kings and princes. Claiming to be the Bride of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church has been in bed with godless rulers down through history. Hundreds of examples could be given, not just from centuries past but from recent times as well.

Consider the alliances with Mussolini and Hitler. The Vatican literally put Mussolini into power. Pope Pius XI and his cardinals praised Mussolini as a man chosen by God and forbade Roman Catholics to oppose him politically. In turn, Mussolini signed the Concordat with the Vatican in 1929, making Roman Catholicism the sole religion of Italy. The Vatican received 750 million lire in cash and 1 billion in state bonds. Four years later in 1933 came a similar Concordat with Hitler, resulting in the Vatican's reception of hundreds of millions of German marks from the Nazi regime all through World War II. Similar concordats with many other governments have made the Roman Catholic Church the only religion allowed in those countries and have brought persecution and death upon thousands of evangelicals. One could not ask for clearer examples of "fornication with the kings of the earth"! Ancient Babylon doesn't meet this criteria, nor does any other city.

Christ never joined forces with Caesar nor did Peter or Paul. But the Roman Catholic Church has continually engaged in adulterous relationships with secular rulers right up to the present. The cover of Time magazine for February 24, 1992 declared: **"HOLY ALLIANCE: How Reagan and the Pope conspired to assist Poland's Solidarity movement and hasten the demise of Communism."** The alliance between Reagan and Pope John Paul II, between the CIA and the alleged Vicar of Christ, could only be called spiritual fornication. It violated everything Christ taught about His church not being of this world. Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig acknowledged that "the Vatican's information was absolutely better and quicker than ours in every respect." Vatican liaison to the White House, Arch-bishop Pio Laghi, kept reminding American officials, "Listen to the Holy Father. We have 2000 years experience in this." Two thousand years is an exaggeration, but there have been centuries of political intrigue at which the Vatican is clearly the master! And this is the true Church? No, this is the whore!

Mikhail Gorbachev has called the pope "the highest spiritual authority on earth." Gorbachev paid tribute to the earthly power of the Roman Catholic Church when he wrote in his syndicated column: "Pope John Paul II played a major political role in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe ...the events in Eastern Europe might not have been possible without the presence of this pope, without the great role... which he knew how to play on the world scene." Such praise could never have been given to Christ or His Apostles who were martyred by the secular world which the popes have embraced in spiritual fornication and have even dominated.

FIFTH, this city on seven hills "rules over the kings of the earth" (v 19). In John's day it was the Rome of the Caesars that ruled the world. After the Caesars lost their power the popes ruled in their place and over wider territories and often more ruthlessly. Christ said that His kingdom is not of this world and His servants are not to fight. In direct disobedience, the popes, who included some of the greatest military commanders in history (Innocent III, who "held all Europe in his net," never lost a battle), fought with armies and navies in the name of Christ to build a huge kingdom, an unrivaled worldwide empire of property, wealth, and political influence which is very much of this world. Papal worldly power has been wielded for centuries in fulfillment of John's remarkable vision-while ancient Babylon has been in ruins. Hundreds of examples could be given. Here are a few.

Pope Alexander II decreed that Harold, the lawful King of England, was a usurper, excommunicated him and his followers and gave the throne to William, Duke of Normandy. With the Pope's blessing, William the Conqueror killed Harold in battle, took over England and was crowned in London on Christmas Day in 1066. He accepted the crown of England "in the name of the Holy See of Rome." As the Pope's agent, William the Conqueror, now their king, was required to teach the English people "due obedience to Christ's Vicar" and to pay their taxes to the Pope punctually.

Pope Alexander III excommunicated the Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarosa. The latter came for revenge with his armies against the pope and was soundly defeated. Frederick I, the emperor, came to Venice where he grovelled at the pope's feet with his face in the dust, begging forgiveness. The pope put his heel on the emperor's neck while the cardinals chanted, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder" Papal Rome has ruled the kings of the earth!

Pope Gregory VII's claim to be "King of kings" was no idle boast! In 1077, Gregory forbade Henry IV, heir of Charlemagne (who had been crowned emperor by Pope Leo III) and supreme head of the Holy Roman Empire, to rule the kingdoms of Italy and Germany and threatened to excommunicate anyone who would serve him as king. In fear for his life, Henry journeyed across the Alps in winter to beg the pope's forgiveness. The humbled emperor had to stand 3 days in penitence, barefoot and in a haircloth shirt outside the Pope's castle at Canossa before he was granted an audience to express his repentance.

In 1155 Pope Adrian IV gave the crown of Ireland to the King of England, consigning the Irish to the merciless cruelties of Henry II. A later King of England, John Lackland, tried to break free from Rome, and Pope Innocent III forced him to surrender his crown, thereafter allowing him to rule only as a vassal of the Holy See. One 18th-century Catholic historian counted 95 popes who claimed to have divine power to depose kings and emperors. Historian R.W. Southern declared: "During the whole medieval period there was in Rome a single spiritual and temporal authority exercising powers which in the end exceeded those that had ever lain within the grasp of a Roman emperor."

Pope Gregory XI's papal bull of 1372, **In Coena Domini**, claimed papal dominion over the entire Christian world, secular and religious, and excommunicated all who failed to obey the popes and to pay them taxes. That bull was confirmed by subsequent popes and in 1568 Pope Pius V swore that it was to remain an eternal law.

Surely no other city at the present or in history can rival the way in which Rome, especially Catholic Rome, qualifies as being a city reigning over kings! Again these are but a few of hundreds of examples that could be given covering centuries when Babylon lay in ruins. Nor is empire building an abandoned feature of the past. The Second Vatican Council in **Lumen Gentium** on November 21, 1964 declared that "the Catholic Church ceaselessly and efficaciously seeks for the return of all humanity and all its goods under Christ..," meaning, of course, under the Pope, Christ's alleged Vicar.

THE SIXTH POINT: Not only is Babylon the code name for Rome, but Rome's connections to Babylon go much deeper. Ancient Babylon drew its Semitic name, Bab-ilu ("gate of god") from the Tower of Babel around whose ruins it was built. That tower, designed to reach

heaven, was the headquarters of the first world religion, just as Rome will be for the coming world religion of Antichrist. Furthermore, just as Babel's tower and city ("Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven" - Gen 11:4) united church and state, so the popes wielded both civil and religious authority; and in like manner the Woman and the Beast she rides unite the coming world government and world religion.

With its attempt to reach heaven by steps of its own making, Babel/Babylon was the ultimate works religion. And so it is in Roman Catholicism: salvation is unquestionably by works. Vatican II declares: "To gain indulgences the **work prescribed** must be done From the most ancient times in the church **good works** were also offered to God for the salvation of sinners [A]ll men may attain to salvation through faith, baptism and the **observance of the commandments.**"

The Council of Trent as repropounded by Vatican II decreed: "If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation... and that without them... men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification ...let him be anathema." Clearly good works play a key role in earning salvation in Catholicism as the average Catholic would testify. Thus by its practice of salvation through good works and ritual, Catholic Rome, once again, fits the description of the Woman whose name is Babylon.

THE SEVENTH identifying feature: John tells us that the name BABYLON emblazoned on the Woman's forehead is preceded by the word, MYSTERY. Here again Rome qualifies: mystery is the very heart of Roman Catholicism. Pope Paul VI's encyclical on the Eucharist is titled, **Mysterium Fidei**. Vatican II refers repeatedly to "the mystery of the Eucharist." The Vatican's new universal catechism declares that all of the church's liturgy is "mystery" and that its aim is "to initiate souls into the mystery of Christ (It is mystagogy)." By claiming to be the custodian of a "mystery" which only its priests and bishops can mediate, the Roman Catholic Church keeps its members dependent upon it rather than upon Christ for their salvation, which it has historically sold for money and still does so today (Mass cards and indulgences, for example) and thus trades in the "souls of men" (Rev 18:13).

THE EIGHTH POINT: John notes that the Woman on the Beast is clothed "in purple and scarlet" (v 4). These were the colors of the Roman Caesars, became those of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and remain so today. For example, the **Catholic Encyclopedia** declares: **Cassock (also called Soutane)** - The close-fitting, ankle-length robe worn by the Catholic clergy as their official garb The color for bishops and other prelates is **purple**, for cardinals **scarlet.**" Perhaps this seems like a small point, but as one identifying feature after another falls into place the case becomes overwhelming. No other city meets all criteria as does Rome.

THE NINTH identifying feature: The woman is wealthy beyond calculation: "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand..." (Rev 17:4). The Roman Catholic Church is by far the wealthiest institution on earth. Every cathedral has its "treasury" where priceless objects are displayed. The value of innumerable sculptures by such masters as Michelangelo, paintings by the world's greatest artists and countless other art treasures and ancient documents which she possesses (not only at the Vatican but in cathedrals around the world) is beyond calculation. Nino Lo Bello, former Rome correspondent for

Business Week, calls the Vatican "the tycoon on the Tiber" because of its incredible wealth and worldwide enterprises. His research indicates that it is probably the largest holder of stocks and bonds in the world, to say nothing of its ownership of industries from electronics and plastics to airlines and chemical and engineering firms. There is no church, no city which is a spiritual entity, no religious institution past or present which even comes close to possessing the incalculable wealth of the Roman Catholic Church.

The rich clothing adorning the woman reflect the fact that the robes worn by popes and the regalia used in pomp and ceremony were inherited from the Caesars. One Catholic historian has written: "...the Bishop of Rome looked like Constantine, lived like him, dressed like him, inhabited his palaces, ruled over his lands, had exactly the same imperial outlook... the popes had become obsessed with power and possessions. Peter's [alleged] successors [became] not the servants but the masters of the world. They... dress in purple like Nero and call themselves Pontifex Maximus."

TENTH, the woman riding the Beast has a golden cup in her hand. This is the holiest instrument in Roman Catholicism: the golden chalice used in the Eucharist or Mass. The Roman Catholic Church possesses literally hundreds of thousands of solid gold chalices.

ELEVENTH, John perceives that this golden chalice is filled with the "filthiness of her abominations," reflecting the Bible's view of the sacrifice of the Mass, the very heart of Roman Catholicism. Such was the conviction of hundreds of thousands of Christians throughout history who were burned at the stake for refusing to participate in the Mass, which they earnestly believed was the greatest abomination conceivable. Why? Because it claims to be the literal sacrificial offering again and again of the body and blood of Christ, whereas the Bible clearly says that Christ's sacrifice upon the cross was completed once and for all, never to be repeated again.

Catholicism claims that when, at the Last Supper, Christ said, "This is my body... this is my blood," He had to be taken literally: the bread and wine He held in His hands had, with those words, become His literal body and blood; and when the priest speaks those words today the bread and wine become again Christ's literal body and blood to be sacrificed endlessly on Catholic altars as truly as Christ was sacrificed on the cross. Yet no one takes it literally when Christ said, "I am the door, I am the light of the world, I am the Good Shepherd" or when He called His disciples sheep. Christ was obviously speaking figuratively when He referred to bread and wine as His body and blood. There is no way that the bread could literally be His body when He was sitting there in His physical body holding the bread! Much less can millions of tiny wafers each be simultaneously Christ's literal body and blood, soul, personality, divinity, whole and entire as Catholicism claims. That is not literalism but mysticism, the MYSTERY emblazoned on the Woman's forehead.

There is another grave error involved. Vatican II declares, "Our Savior at the Last Supper... instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood" The Council of Trent agrees that Christ at the Last Supper "offered up to God the Father His own body and blood under the form of bread and wine" If so, then He was sacrificed for the sins of the world at the Last Supper before He went to the cross! Indeed, He wouldn't have to go to the cross at all if

Catholic priests, as they claim, can truly turn bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Christ and offer it as a propitiatory sacrifice on their altars! This is the great **MYSTERY** at the heart of Catholicism!

The **Pocket Catholic Dictionary** states: "The Mass is a truly propitiatory sacrifice" by which "the Lord is appeased, He grants grace... and He pardons wrongdoings and sins" The Council of Trent declared, "regarding the great mystery of the Eucharist... it is the true and only sacrifice." Then the cross is unnecessary!

Of course, Catholicism teaches that the cross is essential, yet it reduces the cross to the same level as the Mass, declaring that Christ's sacrifice upon the cross is only effective in its repetition in the Mass, and then only partially each time the Mass is repeated. It takes many repetitions of the Mass to take a soul to heaven; nor can the Pope himself tell how many Masses may be needed. As the **Pocket Catholic Dictionary** explains:

Finally the Mass is the divinely ordained means of applying the merits of Calvary. Christ won for the world all the graces it needs for salvation and sanctification. But these blessings are conferred gradually and continually since Calvary and mainly through the Mass The priest is indispensable, since he alone by his powers can change the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ... the more often the sacrifice is offered the more benefit is conferred.

In other words, Christ's sacrifice is not yet complete but is still in process through the Mass. Vatican II says: "For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, 'the work of our redemption is accomplished.'" But the Bible says redemption has already been accomplished. Hebrews 9:12 assures us that "by his own blood [Christ] obtained eternal redemption for us." Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14 both state, "In whom [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" Yet Vatican II insists: "For in the sacrifice of the Mass Our Lord is immolated... the Mass is... a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated." The **Pocket Catholic Dictionary** explains that in the Mass Christ "offers himself... as really as he did on Calvary." Then what did Christ mean when He cried in triumph, "It is finished!"? Indeed, that golden cup is "full of abominations" (v 4).

Contradicting itself, Catholicism explains that Christ is not really being sacrificed over and over but His sacrifice on the cross is being "represented" or made present. Such a statement is meaningless. An event that was completed in the past cannot be made present. Moreover, if the past event accomplished its purpose then there is no reason for wanting to perpetuate it in the present even if that could be done. For example, if a benefactor pays a creditor the debt someone owes, the debt is gone forever. It would be meaningless to speak of representing or reenacting or perpetuating the payment in the present. The debt has been paid by a transaction that was effected and completed in the past. One could well "remember" with gratitude the payment that was made, but no reenactment would have any virtue since there no longer remains any debt to be paid.

Yet the new **Catechism of the Catholic Church** says, "As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal

benefits from God." (par 1414, p 356) That is like trying to pay more installments of a debt that has been paid in full. Clearly the Mass is a denial of the sufficiency of the payment Christ made for sin upon the cross!

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be in the process of procuring through its rituals the redemption/salvation which the Bible says Christ has already accomplished. In order to carry on the "work of redemption," the Catholic priesthood claims to perform the miracle of transubstantiation: turning bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ "under the appearance of remaining bread and wine." This **MYSTERY** is supposed to be a great miracle even though the wafer and wine remain unchanged in physical qualities. There is no such "miracle" in the Bible. Did Christ ever give a blind man his sight "under the appearance of the man remaining blind"? Did He ever raise a dead man to life "under the appearance of the man remaining dead"? Under those circumstances it would not be unbelief but common sense to deny that the alleged miracle had occurred at all!

Suppose the water turned to wine by Christ at the wedding in Cana had been this kind of "miracle"! The servants pour it out to the governor of the feast and he exclaims, "I asked for wine. This is water!" The servants insist, "Sir it is wine." Angrily the governor shouts, "It looks like water, tastes like water, it is water!" "You need faith," the servants insist. "This is a miracle! Christ turned water into wine-but under the appearance of remaining water." "That's not a miracle, that's a fraud!" would be the governor's response. And he would be right. And so it is with transubstantiation! The golden cup is "full of abominations."

The dogma of purgatory is another abomination in the golden cup. Vatican II says that although Christ suffered to bear our eternal punishment, we must personally suffer to expiate the temporal punishment due for our sins: "Sins must be expiated ...through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life... [or] in the next life through fire and torments or **purifying** punishments... in purgatory the souls of those 'who died in the charity of God and truly repentant for their sins and omissions' are cleansed after death with punishments designed to purge away their debt." Yet Peter himself declared that Christ has "once suffered for sins, [He] the just for [us] the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18) **not to purgatory**.

There is a further contradiction. Although Catholicism says we must personally suffer, it also says we don't have to. Masses and rosaries can be said, even after one's death, to reduce one's suffering in purgatory. For those who die wearing the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and fulfill certain other obligations, she promises to go into purgatory the Saturday after their death and take them out to heaven. So they don't have to personally suffer. Christ's sacrifice on the cross was not sufficient, but its alleged repetition in the Mass, if done enough times, will eventually get one to heaven. Moreover, good Catholics may offer their sufferings to release souls from purgatory. Padre Pio manifested the stigmata for 40 years to pay the penalty for the sins of the world so that souls could be released from purgatory. Of such alleged saints, Vatican II says, "They have carried their crosses to make expiation for their own sins and the sins of others. They were convinced that 'by their suffering' they could help their brothers to obtain salvation from God" Catholicism has indeed filled that golden cup with abominations! 35:25 For centuries the payment of money brought deliverance from purgatory. That practice eventually troubled Martin Luther's conscience and sparked the Reformation. Who can forget the

infamous sales pitch of the Dominican Friar Tetzl, commissioned by Pope Leo X to reap a fortune for Rome: "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs"!

This was nothing new. Rome had consistently sold salvation for centuries. Again we say, she has "made merchandise of...souls of men" (Rev 18:13). Popes published lists of every crime from incest to piracy to murder with a price for which the Church would give absolution for each. For example, a deacon guilty of murder could be absolved for 20 crowns. The "anointed malefactors" as they were called, once pardoned by the Church, could not be prosecuted by civil authorities because the Church reigned supreme. Here is a further abomination filling the Woman's cup: selling tickets to heaven which actually send people to hell!

Similar practices continue in Roman Catholicism to this day. One may obtain a Mass card from any mortuary. When the names of the deceased and the donor have been filled in and an offering given to the church, the priest will place the card on the altar during Mass, allegedly reducing the time of suffering for the deceased in purgatory. Of course, the Church makes no guarantee how much the suffering will be shortened nor how many more Masses must be said before the gates of heaven can be opened. Consequently, multiple Masses are purchased hoping that eventually enough will have been celebrated. A friend's father died recently and he told me that \$2,000 in Mass cards were purchased at the funeral.

Some Catholics claim they don't believe in indulgences; but Vatican II declares: "The Church... teaches and commands that the usage of indulgences-a usage most beneficial to Christians and approved by the authority of the Sacred Councils-should be kept in the Church; and it condemns with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them." There are 20 complex rules governing indulgences. Rule 17 explains that the use of a crucifix, rosary, scapular or medal "can gain a partial indulgence. But if this object of piety is blessed by the Pope or any bishop, the faithful who use it with devotion can also gain a plenary [full] indulgence on the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul"

Here is another abomination filling that gold chalice. What kind of "God" grants favors depending upon whether a priest or a bishop has blessed some scapular or medal and whether it is used on a feast of Peter or Paul-and favors, remember, which the sufferings of Christ upon the cross could not procure!

TWELFTH, the Woman is called "the mother of harlots." As well as spiritual harlots, Roman Catholicism has created literal harlots by the millions. Throughout history, and today, priests, bishops, cardinals and popes without number who claimed to be celibates have had their lovers. There were popes who were the sons of supposedly celibate popes: Pope Sylvester was fathered by Pope Hormisdas and John XI by Sergius I. The list of bastards who ruled the church includes Popes Boniface I, Gelasius, Agapitus, Theodore, Adrian IV and others. No wonder Pope Pius II, who himself fathered illegitimate children, said that Rome was "the only city run by bastards." For centuries it was a favorite joke that Rome had more prostitutes than any other city because she had the most celibates.

The sexual exploits of supposedly celibate priests and nuns, once hushed up, are increasingly coming out in the open. For example, the **National Catholic Reporter** recently

stated: "Seven French women ... companions of priests who... are forced to 'live clandestinely, for a lifetime, the love they share with a priest' [and who] represent thousands of women in similar relationships... arrived at the Vatican Aug. 20. [They] asked the pope to... look into the reality faced by 'thousands of priest's companions who live in the shadows, often with the approval of church superiors, and by the children who... are raised by their mothers alone or are abandoned."

The Archbishop of Vienna recently stepped down after being charged with sexual abuse of minors. The Bishop of Basel, Switzerland, too, resigned after admitting to an affair with a woman whom he made pregnant. The resignation of Ireland's Prime Minister and collapse of its government was recently precipitated by exposure of 40 years of the Catholic Church and Catholic government officials covering up the continued sexual abuse of a pedophile priest. Homosexual priests are dying of aids worldwide, with estimates that as many as 70% of priests in some seminaries are practicing homosexuals. The Roman Catholic Church in America has paid out an estimated 1 billion dollars in the past few years in out-of-court settlements to cover up its clergy's sexual abuse. The Franciscan Seminary in Santa Barbara, California recently had to shut down because of the sexual involvement of its priests. The Milwaukee archdiocese is in serious financial trouble due to payments it has had to make for out-of-court settlements involving its priests' sexual affairs. The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico is on the brink of bankruptcy because of the lawsuits against it for priestly sexual abuse. I have a file nearly two inches thick of news articles involving sexual immorality of Roman Catholic clergy just within the past two years. It is not that Catholic priests and nuns are any more lustful than the average person they may have started out with higher ideals-but they have had imposed upon them the unbiblical rule of celibacy which becomes a burden too great to bear. The woman is indeed and literally "the mother of harlots."

THIRTEENTH, the Woman is drunk "with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (v 6). For centuries, to disobey the popes was heresy punishable by death. J.H. Ignaz von Dollinger, a leading nineteenth century Catholic professor of Church History, confessed: [S]ince 1183, the view of the Church had been ...[that] every departure from the teaching of the Church ...**must be punished with death, and the most cruel of deaths, by fire.**

For 1,000 years before the Reformation there were Christians who refused to give allegiance to Rome and who were slaughtered by the millions. Everyone knows of the Crusades to retake the Holy Land, but few know that even larger and more numerous crusades were fought to exterminate Christians all over Europe who, out of conscience to God and obedience to the Bible, would not submit to the authority of the popes or embrace Rome's heresies.

The popes promised instant entrance to heaven for those who died in this slaughter of the "heretics." It took about a century to exterminate the Albigensian Christians who at one time were the majority of the population of southern France. Among the cities wiped out by Pope Innocent III was Beziers, France-60,000 massacred there, including women and children, in 1208 A.D., which the pope called "the crowning achievement" of his papacy. In the infamous St. Bartholemew's massacre in August 1572, 70,000 Huguenots were killed, another 200,000 slaughtered over a period of months, causing 500,000 to flee to Protestant countries for refuge. The Waldenses were all but exterminated as were the Hussites. Here is part of Pope Martin V's

letter commanding the King of Poland in 1429 (100 years before the Reformation) to exterminate the Hussites: Know that the interests of the Holy See, and those of your crown, make it a duty to exterminate the Hussites. Remember that these impious persons dare proclaim principles of equality... that all Christians are brethren... that Christ came on earth to abolish slavery; they call the people to liberty While there is still time, then, turn your forces against Bohemia; burn, massacre, make deserts every where for nothing could be more agreeable to God or more useful to the cause of kings, than the extermination of the Hus sites.

We haven't time to mention the horror of the tortures and murders of the Inquisitions which terrorized Europe for centuries. There is no city on earth which even comes close to having shed as much blood both of Christians and Jews as has Rome. Pagan Rome's killing of Christians during periodic persecutions in the first three centuries was nothing compared to the slaughter of both Christians and Jews by Catholic Rome. Historian Will Durant writes candidly: "Compared with the persecution of [alleged] heresy in Europe [by the Roman Catholic Church] ...the persecution of Christians in the first three centuries after Christ [by pagan Rome] was a mild and humane procedure." Yes, this Woman is indeed "drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus" and no other city even comes close to Rome in this regard.

FOURTEENTH, the fact that it is a **WOMAN** who rides the Beast also points to Roman Catholicism. Its main figure is a woman, a false sinless, perpetually virgin and all-powerful "Mary" whom Rome has invented and worships. Catholics deny they worship Mary and insist that the devotion and honor they give her is of a lesser quality than that given to God and Christ. Perhaps in theory, but not in practice. There are thousands of large and ornate shrines to Mary around the world (nearly 1,000 in France alone) visited by hundreds of millions each year, but scarcely a handful of shrines to Christ in the entire world and generally very small with few visitors.

Pilgrims to Mary's shrines come to ask for her help and protection. Both the new universal Catechism of the Catholic Church and Vatican II declare: "From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs." (par 971, p 253) Why fly to Mary's protection when God's protection is available? And if this Catholic Mary can indeed protect all Catholics from all dangers and supply all their needs, then she must be at least as great as God. And apparently she is more sympathetic, because at least 1000 times as many prayers are offered to Mary as are offered to God and Christ combined.

Yes, prayers TO Mary, not just asking her to pray for us but asking her to DO what she would have to be God to do-even asking her to provide the salvation and forgiveness of sins that Christ has already provided and offers freely in grace. In his "Prayer for the Marian Year" Pope John Paul II asks Mary to comfort, guide, strengthen and protect "the whole of humanity." To do so she would have to be all-powerful, all-knowing and everywhere at once. His prayer ends: "Sustain us, O Virgin Mary, on our journey of faith and obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation."

But Christ offers salvation freely to all who will believe in Him and cries out to mankind, "Come unto me!" The Catholic is taught, however, that the way to Christ is through His Mother

whose pleas the Lord cannot resist. I would be insulted if friends whom I love, instead of coming directly to me, asked my mother to influence me on their behalf; but the idea that Christ's mother can prevail upon Him for favors is a major belief among Catholics.

The most recited Catholic prayer, the rosary, cries out for help to Mary, calling her "Mother of Mercy! our life, our sweetness, and our hope!" The Bible says Christ is our life and our hope, and surely God's mercy was extended to mankind before Mary was born so she could hardly be its Mother! Another popular Catholic prayer to Mary says, "In thy hands I place my eternal salvation, and to thee do I entrust my soul For, if thou protect me, dear Mother, I fear nothing; not from my sins, because thou wilt obtain for me the pardon of them; nor from the devils, because thou art more powerful than all hell together; nor even from Jesus, my Judge himself, because by one prayer from thee, he will be appeased. But one thing I fear; that in the hour of temptation I may neglect to call on thee, and thus perish miserably. Obtain for me, then, the pardon of my sins"

The Catholic Mary is not the Mary of the Bible, but the Woman who rides the Beast. She is appearing around the world in thousands of apparitions, offering her peace plan for the world and millions are believing in her instead of in Christ.

Revelation 17 and 18 refer to the same city, which was and is both religious and commercial. By pointing out the similarities, Dyer established that last year. I consider these chapters to be among the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible, foretelling with absolute accuracy the rise of this city to world dominion and its religious abominations.

The woman riding the beast cannot be the literal city of Babylon being rebuilt in Iraq for many reasons. While Babylon could seem to meet some of the criteria in Rev 17, she falls far short of meeting them all. She has been in ruins for 2000 years meeting none of the fourteen criteria given to John, while the Vatican has been fulfilling them all. Even if, as Dyer argues, Babylon has never been completely without inhabitants, she has certainly not played any role in world affairs during that time.

Furthermore, that a rebuilt ancient city would somehow become such a great city as to rule the world (it's not the Beast that is said to rule the world at this point, but the woman riding it) in a brief time and make up for having been in ruins ever since John penned these lines is rather far-fetched. It also would seem to argue against imminency for the rapture, considering the great length of time it would take not only for ancient Babylon to be rebuilt but to be inhabited by hundreds of thousands of people and to become dominant in world affairs. That it would happen to a city in Iraq makes it even more unlikely.

What we have attempted to show from the Bible and history is not some new theory lately dreamed up but has been the conviction of untold numbers of evangelical Christians who down through the ages existed independently of Rome and would not give allegiance to her and were therefore slaughtered by the millions. Martin Luther referred to them when he said, "We are not the first to declare the papacy to be the kingdom of Antichrist, since for many years before us so many and such great men (whose number is large and whose memory is eternal) have undertaken to express the same thing so clearly and plainly."

Of these martyrs, historian Will Durant wrote, "The Roman Church, they were sure, was the Whore of Babylon" Such was the opinion even of many leading Roman Catholics in the Middle Ages. For example, St. Bonaventure, cardinal and general of the Franciscans, said that Rome was just like the harlot of the Apocalypse. The Reformers were certain of this and it was written into their creeds. Thus D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones declared, "I would not hesitate with the Reformers of the 16th century to [say that Roman Catholicism] is, as the Scripture puts it, 'the whore.'" One could hardly come to any other conclusion from John's vision. This has been the view of the evangelical church for 1500 years, yet that opinion is lately being abandoned by evangelicals in the interests of ecumenism-or because ancient Babylon is now being rebuilt by Saddam Hussein.